

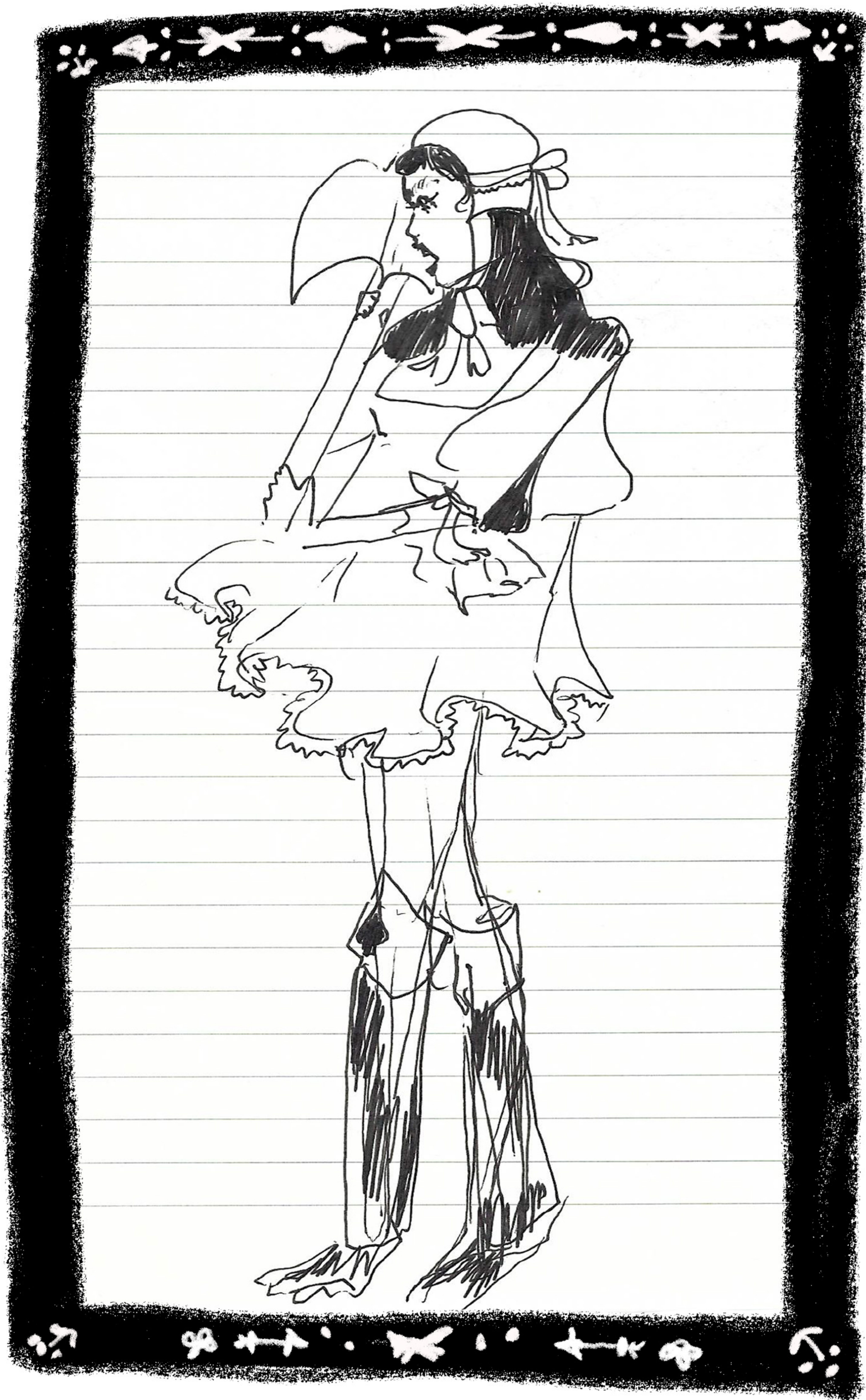


Rock

& Ready

if it were just a couple dozen years prior
the highest height would be my chimney
and I would conquer it when the tar
got pricked and in peeked the moon
climb up on the shingles and watch the sightline
shoot far past my forehead and
the scratch that marks my centimeters on the doorframe
let's keep this between
you and me for I always feel a little taller
than I really am

villains get drunk off this power
and that's why I'm far ahead of the naked pull-up windows
spent a life behind
mosquito sheets and other sheets and other things
which clog the air with someone else's memories
we can talk of time all we want
I want to know what keeps the days in tact
if one day we hit the pavement too hard and
spill all of the knowledge tucked into the secret jacket pocket
who exactly takes it?
I hope the ether rakes it up into once big jar
and feels satisfied for a second
that once day it may spend it on something really precious and makes us
all proud.



No amount of planetary transit warnings or whispers of transformation allowed me to predict a doomsday morning. Waking up as though an alien parasite had fused to my face and weighed it down to the ground in shame. Layered in sloughs of red and translucent hills, potent with enough shame and disgust to pin me to the edge of the football field and let the tears roll down the very landscape that set me to Total Zero. I think about all the awful things that crossed swords with me. None of them ever killed me. You may quote me on multiple occasions swearing that we all get what we deserve and I suppose I needed to die on my 18th birthday. The split-second obliteration of ego, the stagger of months and months, and the unrest. I developed a hatred and gnawing jealousy towards people with clear skin, felt more akin to the ravaged street crawlers than the next girl, and knew that I had to keep living because the only glue to reconstruct my sad pile of ashes was time. And despite learning independence without body, the only thing which will stay with me is a smoldering resentment.

I was not reborn as a baby, but spawned in the middle of an opening sequence. A prisoner who must whittle a pick in two simple strikes to burst onto the riot. That's all I'm allowed. The rotten gnaw of escape possessing the compass purpose. I've yet to find the miracle bone to bash into a key, curing in the childhood comfort of my cell. Sentenced to isolation. To a pathetic hiss in an age where all the other girls hold hypnotic croons.

The visual identity is placed center-stage in our present. The post, story, profile. Neatly cataloged with a priority for the spotless. And the worst part of it all is the timing. When the rest of everybody is smooth as they're ever going to be, I am a ramshackle secondary thing. You wonder what G-d decided to save me for, what he thought this would teach me, but all it showed was that my character doesn't matter if you have to stare at the wall while you speak to me. Or else put on a show to pretend you don't notice.



the rabbits all kicked up their boots and sent a great fog
to sheen the sun into a pink disc

it plays my song of the hour but
I don't want to share it with you that would
curdle my sacred string bond between
me and turner and the solitary moment
driving-screaming-singing with the
windows down 'cause there's nothing else
left to do midweek

dropped off on the curb with a sack of minutes
there should've been more deliberation of
what I would spend them on it hasn't
been too responsible
I wish they were like seeds or beans
I could divvy them up to the hungry
or the dying
or the martian part of my head and hands
which I need to shake to wake up
in hopes I would be compelled to do something
other than stake my foot in the ground
and twist it ever-shyly at the singular you



isn't that what all the greats do?
in the changeling season which sits
with a surplus of its own
breaths stolen from me,
proclamations,
attestations of action,
and marvels at a mirrorlake
but I willingly gave up my javelin

after so many throws up towards a
shiny comet of achievements
which ignore the winds and bends of
my feminine kind of suffering
my jealous syrup freedom
to answer what I am
when I lose my plasma tail
left with a one-way ticket
and a hundred river veins



it'll lie in all the empty afternoons
where I tire of my dreamache
and sacrifice to the edge of the woods my
treasured singular you
trying out a new kind of sober
we all know it's not a party without longing

it's hidden somewhere inbetween the echoes of
g-d's laughter and inheriting the sigh
at simple dust and dusk from my mother
like all the greats do



I keep breaking the promises I made myself
for the heat and momentary present perfect
I'll only ever take it from your hands
leave my lipstick there and remind you what it is I am

a daisy-red stain on that squarecut life of yours
just potent enough to drip some ink onto your windowsill
and soil a line or two in the notebook
laid everywhere splayed open

how could the world resist turning us
into a Barbier tableau with just a little sun licking
a streak of the living room and stippling across my drape
in thousands of combinations on that tanned leather

choose just one to look at in respite from your crane
over the world, in the gentle morning fuzz or sinkhole night
I like to think with my straightbacked mind that our
silhouettes hinge together in the cosmic tapestry

but we only concern the limits of this room
if the branching cracks in the wall can hold our silence
doublefaced, one coat in my comfortable blue bliss
the other sorting through which hooks to toss

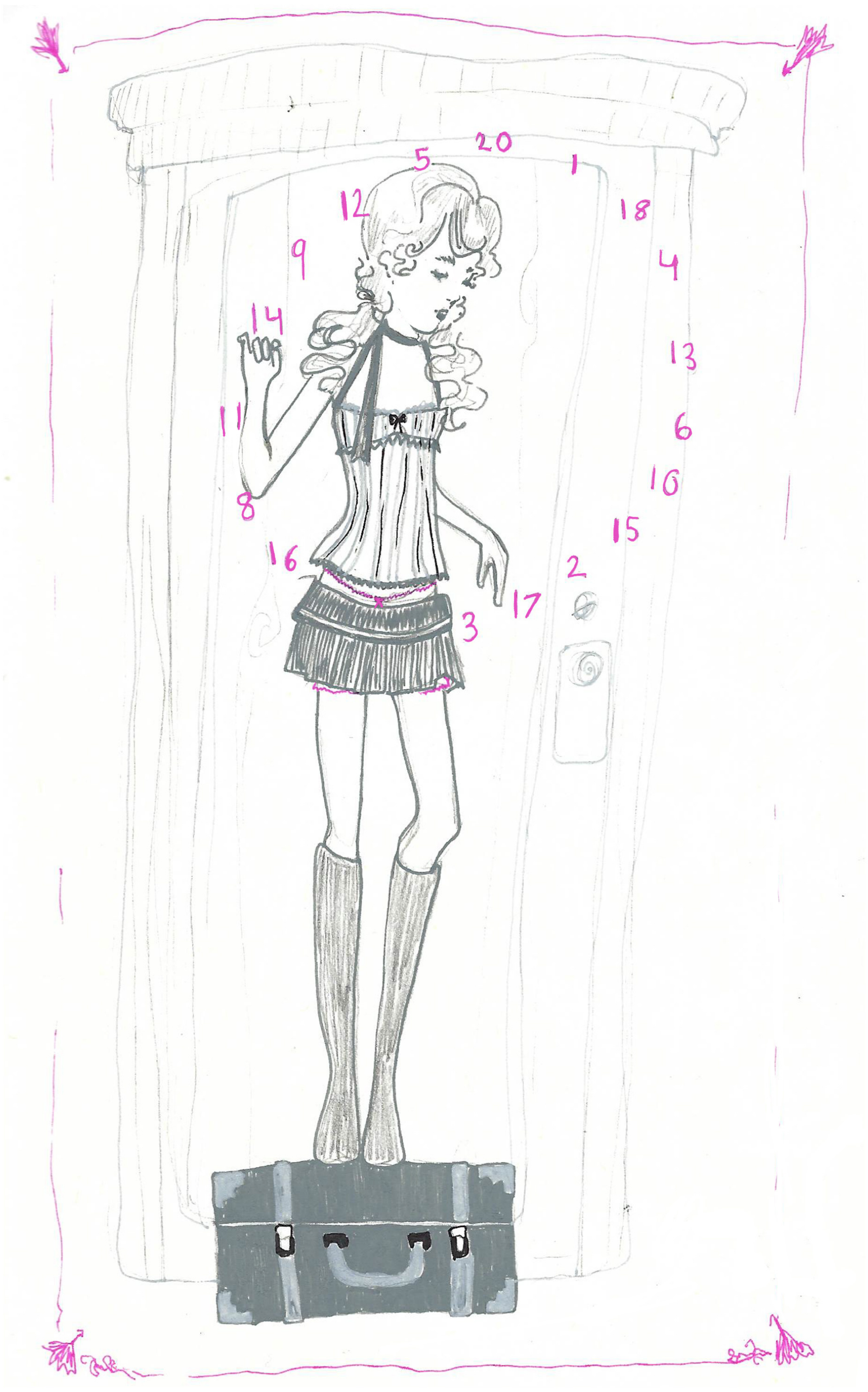
kindred in the wavering, speaking only with weight
enough to crush your cigarette beneath
stained daisy-red in proof that our lips met in one way
or the other

the sweater I once wore to english class is steeped with your incense
and a memory of cigarettes as though a dungeon victim
slowly watching my white horse values torn apart by one
maybe it doesn't make me happier, but it sure makes me feel alive

your ribs are the keepers of all the heat this wretched world has
succeeding the sun by watts and miles and kindness
ducking into your shape, rocked by your steady breath
tethered to an ancient source of power
which everyone kept secret from me on purpose

I'd turn into a zealot seeking to rid it from every palm but mine
they're right, I see the phantom trails in the wind
taste the vanilla beige walls filling with those
cinnamon sticks which stick to every fiber of my smile
and let them fill my memory too
wrestling with my dog hunger not to gun it back
and howl up at your window when that's your job

in another life we lived in yaffo
and the sandy colour of living room afternoon
was baked into every stone which set our city
I know you remembered the evenings
with grainy porcelain set feasts and mothertongue riddles
under hanging stars
the same stars g-d put down and the same stars
which laze from our necks side by side
turn into a pendulum over me
counting down the hours until we part again
because our meeting was born of leaving
nurtured by an instinct flame and torn from
your rib was my breath



when you watched me press the suitcase down
with my whole body did you laugh at
a blighted monstress in ribbons
or a foal in the fairest sense finally
meeting the resistance of material things

i'll never know
whatever in my presence douses the
entertainer swarming around other people
is it that I'm your fallen star or
a muzzle you've been trying to shake off
sick with questions to which
the tall silence dangles the truth

and all I want is to hear you say it
to be banished like an old curse
because I've not gotten used to
modern methods

I rationalized my reverent dreaming as ambition
for the future but what is there to do when all I live in
are minutes I could fit into the palm of my hand
sieved away like powdered sugar with
each revisit to the vessel that holds them
somehow still asking for seconds
despite anticipating my life to end the moment
it happened, to transform with the whole
glitter and cosmic vacuum fare
into someone which carries my face and none
of the weight that comes with nights of
battling bad bass against the soft songs I hum
on the train as though rallying them to visit the speakers
electing myself as the champion every time
two rounds out in the liquor puddles
and at home in the mirror past midnight
until the traces slip away in the time it takes
to rail down to my old jeans and loops stamped
with winter wheels because there's nothing else to do
there's no spar without the need to determine
whose truth shall live on
I decided to retire to the tower last time
let the dust settle and coat me like a snowbank
until they come to tear it down
safe from the hands which sever my humanity
from the flickers of my body enchanted
by ritual wednesday sax
want it all but my split tongue
who maintains the innocent imagination
by declaring that it's wrong wrong wrong
trying to prove lament runs deeper than joy
and it doesn't take your grandfather to die
to lash your cheeks with pressure that
could erode a coastline in one sunrise
it should take you a thousand and one nights
of sleepless dreaming since our first meeting
to get so close and so demanding
I don't want to talk about it it's a different
suffering than the kind I'm used to
a great difference between sacrifice and surrender
I like it self-inflicted and quiet as a whisper
exchanged in sisterly confessions
passed through the pity smile-sighs
and lost on their way to the you
I surrender my idle train thoughts to



I was surprised to find that my legs
kept a memory of every accidental dig
and formed a map on purpose to prove
that I still know how to get down in the mud
that it's all I've been doing
performance art by taking ruin to my
sheltered legs and telling them to fight
no gloves no chalk just fear into the fray
into the den of old lookers I shouldn't be here
but where else am I supposed to dance?
at least take off into the music
when I cannot stomach taking off to
what the common man calls your haunt
and like a strung out bruiselegged wraith
I stagger down to any place but here
where I can pretend to smile without
letting them drag me onto the meatmarket stage
grimace like myself
dance like myself
watched through the lights in anticipation
of being poached for another man's g-d's will
the ultimate sentence says you will be
and I can't be contained within my bones
they feast and feast until there's no flesh on me
fatfaced in the morning just to give
myself a scare because those real life death
feelings come right up to the surface
and swing from my eyes like lifejackets
full of my own heaving breath
hunched with a grieving for the peaceful
bird I was safe behind my copper chains
and hybrid hubcaps and metal bars they
drape over all the stores in the mall before closing
now my patina is rotten and electric
green blaring to the pedestrians on the sidewalk
look at me and look away
with a piece of my soul drained in a few seconds
every few seconds yet I still don't know what for
I am not that beautiful anymore
a ravaged face like Janis said
in the process of being scooped out from inside
one of those ice cream tubs at the buffet
at least do me a favor and put some sprinkles on
in honour of the girl I was and the girl
I'll never get back



it is my comfort in the dead of the sidewalk
spiked sensation cold and soft huff
that at two points in our block universe our
coordinates aligned
hand in hand on the same marble floor
you waved because that's how you talk
I waved my hair to hide a blush
is there a chance you left a quantum trace
that I absorbed into my skin?
delirious with a swollen want
a swollen need so terminal it's followed
me everywhere sniffing out my freedom
like a runt after the last crumbs of a smile
only to crush with its maw and get in the way
of all the things I write I will do
and to this animal hankering I dedicate my life
I'll have the needing banging on my stomach
while I'm wiping tables or sitting in a boardroom
or pretending you are just around the corner
just a few minutes away just a little too nervous
when it's all a visiontrick
of the animal hankering I dedicate my life
picking up the smallest leads
slamming my little heel on the breaks to
a fruitful something just because it's far away
from the one thing that makes me gasp
like a junkie fresh out of ways to write
the same poem again and again
to the animal hankering I dedicate my life





I walked up the strip in the blue dress
my grandmother said they used
to consider a night slip
trying to revive what is buried deep under
my blistered cheeks

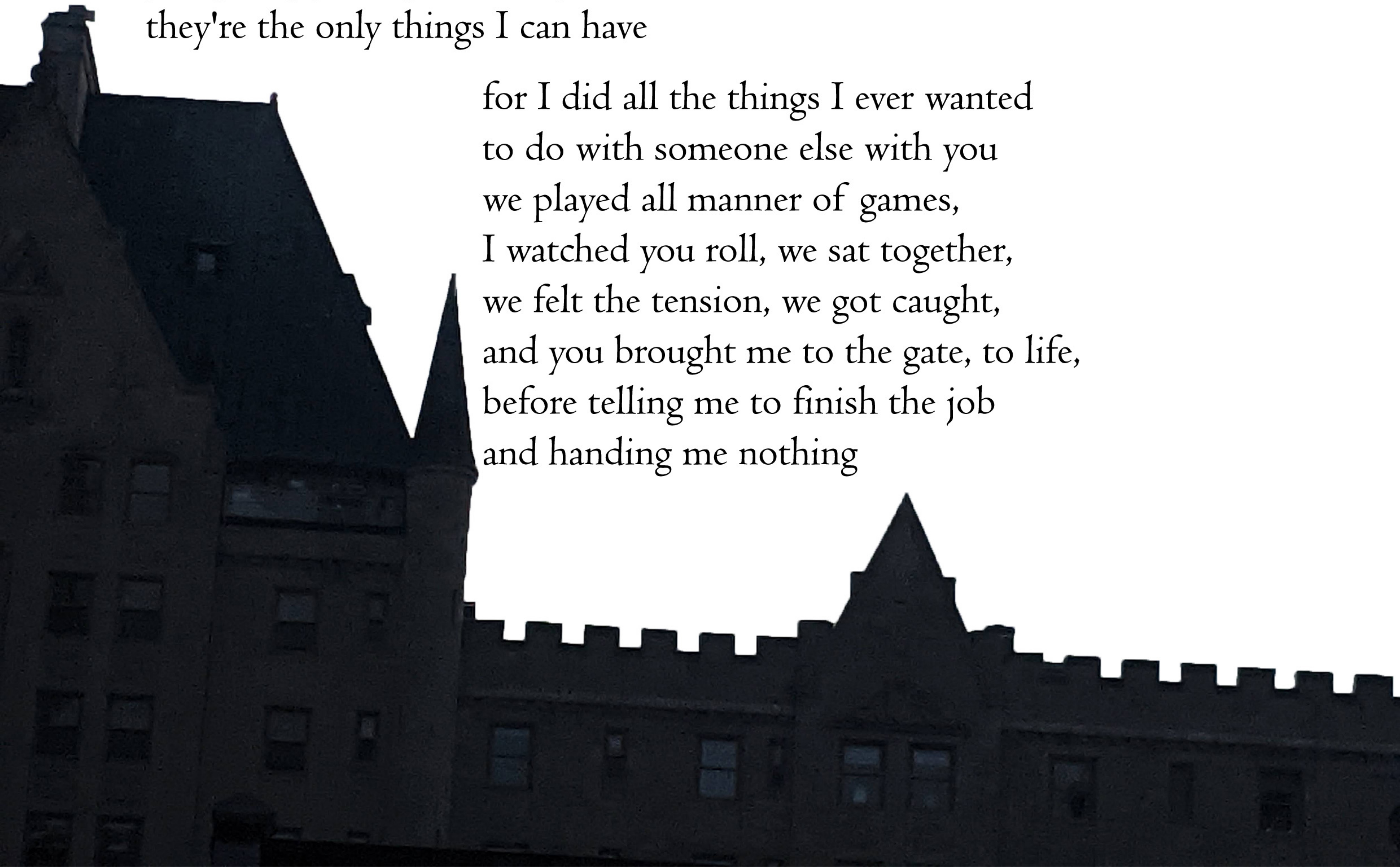
but the fact is I wouldn't even know
how to dress myself had I woken up
without anything to survey for new growth
or worsening condition like a scientist
for I'd forgotten contentment and rage
that comes with having to share beauty
with the rest of the dogs
there was an extraordinarily short creature
in the park which said to me,
'why are you leaving?
pretty girl
I can't have you
I can't have anyone'
this encounter I boiled in pity and nostalgia
the sun was going down in the same strut
as it did two years past
had I been drunk with philosophy
I would've said something stupid
to contest perception as if it was matter
I'm just wearing a dress

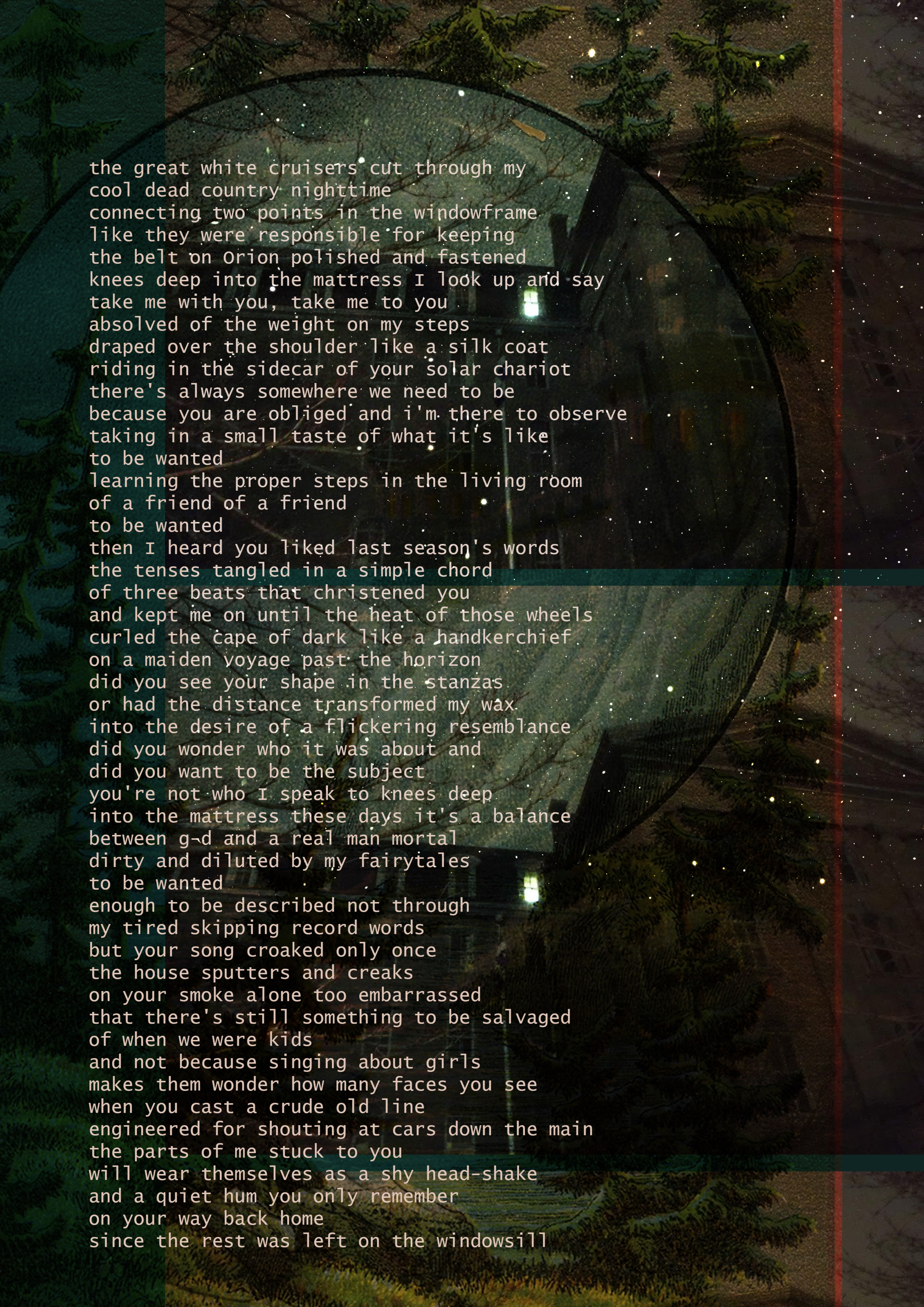
but I had already smoked
and my heels were pink with hurt
I was silent
and pretending I deserved that word at all



sometimes I feel shame for the things i write
why can't they be squeezed tight and die
true as they were, not combed through
until all of the dirt had gone and only
pure tender jewels remained of the scene
made into feed and tossed onto the barricade
which keeps out all the pleas to hear
this isn't all the joy you're getting
learn how to grieve without tribute
in so many vessel words
tossed into my hungry mouth
it can either talk evil or talk smart
but I'm not sure if I should thank g-d
for dangling these impressions of perfect
tableaus to laugh at later and not letting
me keep them forced to leave them
where I found them
rebellling by resurrection
by messing with the natural order
you get ugly things out of good will
they're the only things I can have

for I did all the things I ever wanted
to do with someone else with you
we played all manner of games,
I watched you roll, we sat together,
we felt the tension, we got caught,
and you brought me to the gate, to life,
before telling me to finish the job
and handing me nothing





the great white cruisers cut through my
cool dead country nighttime
connecting two points in the windowframe
like they were responsible for keeping
the belt on Orion polished and fastened
knees deep into the mattress I look up and say
take me with you, take me to you
absolved of the weight on my steps
draped over the shoulder like a silk coat
riding in the sidecar of your solar chariot
there's always somewhere we need to be
because you are obliged and i'm there to observe
taking in a small taste of what it's like
to be wanted
learning the proper steps in the living room
of a friend of a friend
to be wanted
then I heard you liked last season's words
the tenses tangled in a simple chord
of three beats that christened you
and kept me on until the heat of those wheels
curled the cape of dark like a handkerchief
on a maiden voyage past the horizon
did you see your shape in the stanzas
or had the distance transformed my wax
into the desire of a flickering resemblance
did you wonder who it was about and
did you want to be the subject
you're not who I speak to knees deep
into the mattress these days it's a balance
between g-d and a real man mortal
dirty and diluted by my fairytales
to be wanted
enough to be described not through
my tired skipping record words
but your song croaked only once
the house sputters and creaks
on your smoke alone too embarrassed
that there's still something to be salvaged
of when we were kids
and not because singing about girls
makes them wonder how many faces you see
when you cast a crude old line
engineered for shouting at cars down the main
the parts of me stuck to you
will wear themselves as a shy head-shake
and a quiet hum you only remember
on your way back home
since the rest was left on the windowsill

I can't part with the mirror
playing a labrat gambit
sticking the crescents of my nails
into the wounds as if they would heal
as if they decided, swollen with attention,
they had enough and it was time to retreat
back into the deeper nightmares
that only happen when you wish them away
I believe I was delivered someone else's
wish to live in solitude
and slump around the grocery store
making people feel better about themselves
allergic to the sun and sugar and
anything worth living for I have turned
splotched red and drained of that living glow
now ablaze with chemical cures
reluctantly opening my eyes to dusk
fully nocturnal in a rotting decadence
lamenting in a rotting decadence
eating (specially) in a rotting decadence
used to the neighborhood buzzing
with orange and sickly whites aglow
and safe to sulk as the shadows smooth
my cheeks into something palatable
at first glance before lingering on
an overhead flash revealing
a year-old monster

the sky widens to show me everything outside of my gates
almost by command I am drawn
by the hands reaching hands reaching breadths
and lengths of celestial time reaching
the long-ago and the dial of G-d reaching
back to gently guide my dry virgin hand
the amber sidewalk tango twists around
the map of my cell
walls of grey lilac and threads of
spring gossamer hooking the same spot of my
upper arm like how you would to say,
if words weren't enough,
please don't leave me
straightened out I move at last
in survey of all the architecture dismissed
under daylight and obscured by the dust
made-to-order grey glass huts and brick
which turns to terracotta velvet under the lamps
pierced by grey glass mirrors arched or square
or black enough that I only pay attention
to my own shape
intoxicating swamp green saturations
on the rifts between houses just far enough
to where the shades and cocktails
of ivory light can't reach

suddenly the wires and sodium spears
stand in fifth position with energy that blurs
the stars and you need to squint real good
if you want to catch a glimpse of their
coming and going and staying real close
I'm no longer afraid of my own sticky skin
and the woods awake with night birds
broadcasting to the shuttered public
I am alone on the street once the pale blue
residue of the hot breath daytime drops
for I prefer the silky grey to wet sparkling pink
colour of my silhouette
when my eyes fall to the shadow in all its degrees
I test the threshold of magic
on any given night to see which stretch
and shy dance would finally turn it
from girl into a foaming monster
and if I would notice the transformation at all
because I am hit with the same chemicals
as the playground bully finding a crush
come to finally appreciate it all
when it's much too late
and all the bridges have been reconstructed
for tiretracks and gasoline and
a spirit festering restless





the weight on my right mary jane balances
the weightlessness of daddy's old denim
balances the navy pendulum swaying and
jingling a riff from the command of my hips
walking down the street with the scum
and the gilded cadavers squinting and squeaking
as the day rolls onto its side and invites
the shutters to sweep across the banks
and neon-rimmed restaurant glass
reveal what I am, cloaked on the dirt
beneath the natal heavens
my marred suit giving it away if you look
in the right places, closely, for the flint
flashes and sparks on the street corner
and the negative space in bus stop posters
everything but in the face
you speak to the air behind my shoulder
to the machine-rolled toys between my fingers
it doesn't feel good to sense you
awaiting the moment you can forget me
as if I wanted to keep you either
I feel silly
in my tenth grade perfume
strawberries, sour frosting, the shower
I had on the fourth of july in georgia
the traces of spring left behind
on the windshield of a mercedes
with only the light sprinkling a possible
future in the colour of industrial sunset
sprayed on poor old Ossington
I wear my pox with a slick savvy
as if I was never anything else
as if I don't have it at all

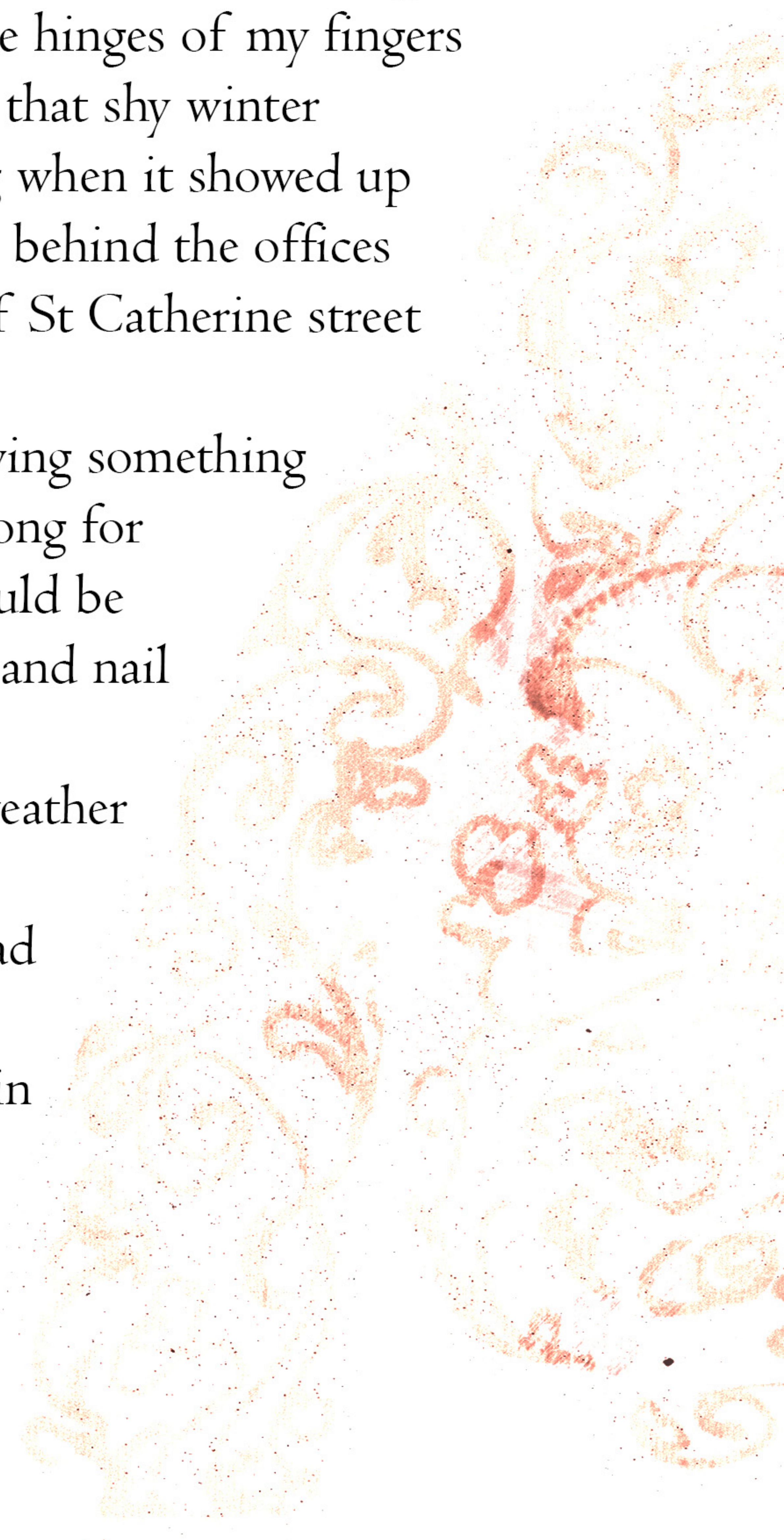


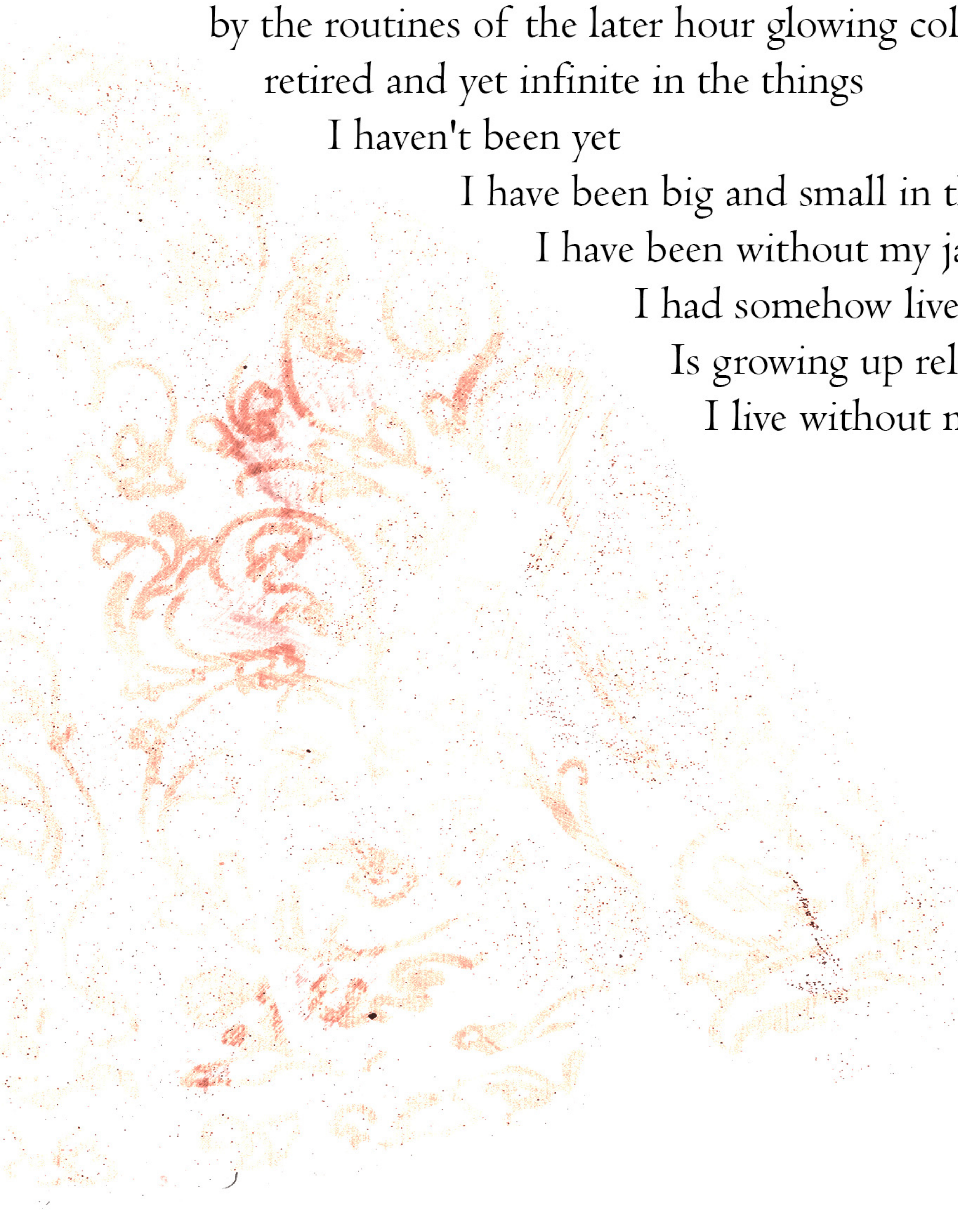
I was over-zealous and immediately
punished for my cruelty to fire
as I aimed the corpse of a cigarette
as though it were a shotput
as though a finely-weighted dart
(better than the ones you have at home,
that's for sure)
and shot it at the fence which split
the native wilderness and dry domesticity
puckered with holes looking sadly,
without enough effort, for a root
so the ashes flurried down on me
my hat was not convincing enough to save
my face from the mischief of the sun
as I slumped at greater angles on the patio
until I gave up reading about another time's
young men, whose spirit did not abandon
the young men now, in fact, it was born
again without failure, the dangerous faces
and their compulsion to nature
all manner of advertising had followed me
since that morning and I had enough
by the time an eye with stick-figure limbs
greeted me on the side of a contact lens box
'you look wise today,' I misread,
'you look nice today'
what is the better compliment?
shouldn't my eyewear make me look smart?
and if there is any wisdom to be found
among the week-long days let it show
instead of making me feel like I've done nothing
waiting for my disease to cure
or lift its wrist to check the watch and say
it's been here long enough

I got my aviator jacket off eBay,
was a boast I kept close swathed
in valiant brown leather intimidating the frost
which numbed the hot steel buildings
and everything past the hinges of my fingers
it repulsed the sun and that shy winter
imitation was nothing when it showed up
in quarters and halves behind the offices
in the northern end of St Catherine street

It made me feel like I was surviving something
fighting something that I will long for
in the mid-life evenings when I should be
denouncing the lifestyle of tooth and nail

I put it on again in the near-summer frail weather
radiating the weight of yesterday
stretched out and dirty sleeves it's almost sad
to see the body begin to flake
as though the shell is more valuable than the new skin
just because it's more familiar
so far I have refused to christen moments of time
keeping the title of an 'era' precious and pristine
like the 3D stickers with tiny beads
inside the plastic outlines
abandoned on the sheet in the name of history
I am significantly bigger and the jacket sits
on me sized fine, no longer storied
overshadowed by convenience and normalcy





Maybe I am not that inquisitive anymore
because my trust in the dance of doors
is a weakness and I have been tricked
by the routines of the later hour glowing colour
retired and yet infinite in the things
I haven't been yet
I have been big and small in the jacket
I have been without my jacket, just like
I had somehow lived without all of these things
Is growing up relenting your rebellion to G-d?
I live without my beauty and still breathe

